

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-03 ISO-00 EUR-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-10 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-14 USIA-04 OMB-01 NIC-01 AID-05 SAB-01 SAM-01

SCCT-01 CIEP-01 DRC-01 /078 W
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R 080745Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 677

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/ADECON 10/7/75

TAGS: PGOV PINT LE SY

SUBJECT: LEBANESE CABINET CRISIS

A. BEIRUT 12035; B. DAMASCUS 2204 (NOTAL)

1. WEEKEND HAS NOW PASSED WITHOUT PRIMIN-DESIGNATE SAEB SALAM MAKING ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT RE COMPOSITION OF NEW CABINET. FOLLOWING OCT. 5 MEETING WITH PRES. FRANGIE TO DISCUSS OUTCOME OF SALAM'S CONSULTATIONS WITH PARLIAMENTARY FACTIONS, SALAM MAINTAINED PUBLIC AIR OF CONFIDENCE, TELLING NEWSMEN HE COULD CONCEIVE OF NO OBSTACLES TO FORMATION OF NEW GOVT. BUT ALSO WARNING AGAINST HASTE.

2. DESPITE SALAM'S PUBLIC ASSURANCES, HOWEVER, THERE ARE INDICATIONS HE IS ENCOUNTERING TROUBLESOME PROBLEMS ON SEVERAL FRONTS IN HIS EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER WORKABLE CABINET. NOT ONLY HAVE KAMAL JUMBLATT AND HIS SUPPORTERS CONTINUED BOYCOTT SALAM'S
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EFFORTS, BUT PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER KAMAL ASSAD IS

APPARENTLY BEING BALKY, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE SUSPECTS SALAM OF HAVING WORKED OUT SECRET "ARRANGEMENT" WITH SHIITE LEADER IMAN MUSA AS SADR--ASSAD'S CHIEF RIVAL IN SOUTH LEBANON. ACCORDING TO SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS, SALAM IS ALSO ENCOUNTERING OPPOSITION FROM HIS "TRADITIONALIST" POLITICAL COLLEAGUES TO HIS REPORTED DESIRE TO INCLUDE SEVERAL YOUNGER "TECHNOCRATS" IN NEW CABINET.

3. IN ADDITION, AS REPORTED REF. B, STRONG OPPOSITION TO SALAM APPEARS TO HAVE DEVELOPED IN DAMASCUS, AND THIS UNDOUBTEDLY IS CAUSING SERIOUS CONCERN ON PART OF SALAM AND PRES. FRANGIE. SALAM MADE POINT OF ATTEMPTING PLACATE DAMASCUS DURING OCT. 6 "VICTORY" RALLY (SPONSORED BY PRO-SYRIAN WING OF LEBANESE BAATH PARTY) BY HEAPING LAVISH PRAISE ON HAFEZ ASSAD AND SADAT FOR THEIR "GLORIOUS" ROLES IN OCTOBER WAR (FBIS BE 061830). (SAEB BEY FOUND HIMSELF A TRIFLE UPSTAGED AT RALLY BY IMAM SADR WHO DESCRIBED SALAM'S NEW GOVT. AS LEBANON'S "LAST CHANCE" FOR REFORM BEFORE REVOLUTION BECOMES INEVITABLE.) WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT SAUDIS MAY BE WEIGHIN IN WITH SARG ON SALAM'S BEHALF.

4. COMMENT: IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, OCTOBER 7, PRESIDENTIAL CHEF DU CABINET DIB INDICATED SALAM WAS ENCOUNTERING NITTY GRITTY LOCAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN ASSIGNING PORTFOLIOS. DIB ADDED THAT PRESIDENT AND HE EMPHASIZING CRITERIA OF HONESTY RATHER THAN EXPERIENCE. HE THOUGHT THE PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE WAS MAKING PROGRESS BUT HAD NO PROJECTION AS TO WHEN THE CABINET WOULD BE FORMED. HE THOUGHT JUMBLATT HAD OVERPLAYED HIS HAND AND CONFIRMED PRESIDENT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH SYRIAN REACTION TO SALAM.
GODLEY

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